

Dear Members of Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Paul Boudreau and I live in Hamden, Connecticut. I support Senate Bill No. 1178: *An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days*.

I have worked as an auto mechanic for 35 years. Many of those years were spent working for companies that offered little or no sick days. As a result there have been many times where I had to either work sick, or go back to work before I recovered.

This includes the year I was diagnosed with a heart problem, Bradycardia . A problem that required me to have a pacemaker implanted. While I was supposed to stay home for two months, I found I was only able to afford to stay home one month. My employer actually sent me flowers with a note attached saying “Get back to work soon”. I knew this meant my job was in jeopardy.

I went back to work on “light duty” after a month. There really is no such thing as light duty when you fix cars. There are no “Light’ transmissions or cylinder heads.

I worked through months of pain and discomfort. Add this to the many issues I’ve developed from fixing cars for 30 years. two disks in my back that are bulging from leaning over cars and picking up heavy components, the two painful rotator cuffs from reaching and working above my head for hours at a time. that needed to be repaired, but was put off for ten years because I couldn't afford to take 5 to 8 weeks off to heal afterwards.

In the end it was determined that the damage to my heart was most likely due to long term exhaustion having worked 60 to 70 hours a week for years. I had almost worked myself to death. We are working ourselves to death so that millionaires and billionaires can hoard even more money and resources. WE sacrifice our bodies, our backs, our knees and in so many ways, we sacrifice our hearts.

Then the market crashed a year later and we never financially recovered . My marriage fell apart and we lost our home.

I still have never really financially recovered. I know that if I had a safety system in place to help me care for myself and still pay my bills, I would be in a different position.

This is why we need to protect our citizens, our vital work force. Without them our economy would screech to a halt.

These are our brothers and sisters, Fathers and Mothers.

They are human beings. While I am glad that the Governor is also on board with expanding paid sick days in CT, we absolutely need a definition of paid sick days that expands our definition of family, includes everyone regardless of employer size, gets rid of a waiting period, allows us to accrue faster, gives us 80 hours instead of 40, and that accounts for pandemics and health emergencies. The bill leaves out people who work for small employers, which would leave out the people who I think are at most risk; laborers who work manual labor and who by default are exposed to toxic chemicals and have higher chances of being sick with things like cancer. We absolutely need to be included in paid sick days bill. We keep Connecticut running.

Please allow the hardest workers in the world to maintain their health and allow them the time they need to heal when they do become ill. Pass this version of a paid sick days expansion.

Thank you for your time,
Paul Boudreau Hamden CT